



Hercules As A Child Holding A Coat Of Arms? - Northern Italy, 17th Century



6 500 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Marble

Width : 30

Height : 67

Depth : 19

Description

Hercules as a Child Holding a Coat of Arms

Northern Italy, 17th century

White and black marble

67 × 30 × 19 cm

Carved in white marble, this charming sculpture depicts the infant Hercules, standing with his right leg slightly bent, holding a coat of arms in his right hand and resting his left on the club, his traditional attribute. His softly modelled features--high, rounded forehead, full cheeks, and upturned nose--combine with the deeply carved curls framing his temples and forehead to convey vitality and innocence. The plump limbs and finely shaped hands attest to the sculptor's refined sense of naturalism. The figure stands on a terrace adorned with a black marble cartouche.

Conceived with a roughly finished back, the

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statue was likely designed for display in a niche within a gallery or courtyard of an aristocratic residence, where it would have served to glorify its owner.

Beyond its decorative appeal, the sculpture carries a philosophical and moral message rooted in Renaissance humanism. Hercules was celebrated as an ethical, aesthetic, and political ideal--an image of the virtuous and balanced ruler. In courtly settings, his figure symbolized strength, virtue, and self-mastery, embodying the princely values of power tempered by wisdom. Stylistically, this youthful Hercules--with his rounded forms, softly polished surfaces, and animated curls--recalls the putti sculpted by North Italian artists of the 17th century, particularly those active in Lombardy and Veneto, whose workshops continued the Renaissance tradition of combining classical themes with Baroque vivacity.

Comparative bibliography:

For related treatments of the infant Hercules and North Italian sculpture, see:

C. Avery, *Sculpture in Italy 1500-1600*, New Haven & London, 1996.

F. Caglioti, *La Scultura del Seicento in Lombardia*, Milan, 2002.

F. Rossi (ed.), *La Scultura in Liguria e Lombardia nel Seicento*, Genoa, 2008.